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DER POSITIVISMUS VOM TODE AUGUST COMTE'S BIS AUF UNSERE TAGE (1857-1891).

By *Hermann Gruber*, S. J. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder'sche Verlagshandlung. 1891.

This pamphlet of 194 pages is the continuation of another pamphlet on August Comte, the founder of Positivism, which was reviewed in *The Open Court*, No. 134. The author is a Jesuit and it is a matter of course that all the facts he relates, all the doctrines he explains are represented from the standpoint of Roman Catholicism. The booklet is of great importance in so far as we learn through it what an erudite Catholic mind thinks of that recent movement of philosophy which has been called by the collective name Positivism. The method pursued by Hermann Gruber is most recommendable. He states facts and quotes abundantly so as to let the various philosophers speak for themselves. He is economical with the salt of his own opinion, yet he uses it with such a discretion that Roman Catholics can become thoroughly acquainted with infidel views without suffering in their faith.

The book consists of two parts: (1) The Positivism of the schools in connection with Comte and of the Positivistic movement outside of these schools. The first part begins with a discussion of Littré. Littré, "the voice, the spirit and the soul of Positivism," as Bourdin calls him, is characterised as a philological genius. Although he had chosen the medical profession, which however he abandoned early, and although he regarded the propaganda of the positive philosophy as his life-work, all his talents lay in the direction of special investigation in the literary, historical, and linguistic fields, and the editing of the French dictionary remains his main achievement.

Comte had not nominated a successor who should in his place be the *Directeur du positivisme*. Littré had forfeited this honor on account of his quarrels with Comte in which he strongly sided with Madame Comte against her husband. After Comte's death P. Lafitte was elected as a temporary director and he has kept this office ever since, which he conducts with remarkable devotion and unselfishness. Although without property himself he proposed not to use the positivistic funds until he had shown himself through his work worthy of using them. He ekes out a scanty living for himself by giving lessons in mathematics, and devotes all the rest of his time to the management of and the propaganda for the Positive Church. His co-workers are Audiffrent, Antoine, Robinet, and others—all of them as the reviewer thinks strange people, visionary enthusiasts, and, to use an expressive Americanism, regular cranks. Lack of space prevents us from recapitulating their ceremonies, their sacraments, festivals, pilgrimages, memorials, and other forms of service. Their whole behavior proves that they are and will remain infidel Roman Catholics and it would have been wiser if they had not left the church at all. The positivistic orthodoxy culminates in the positivistic mystery of Comte's idea of a "Virgin-Mother" (*Vierge-Mère*) which according to Lafitte is destined to elevate the intercourse between the sexes, while Audiffrent, Lagarrigue, and the Brazilian Lemos stick closely to Comte's view "to represent positivism as directly conceived

under the Utopia of a virgin-mother."\* General Lemos goes so far as to say "We prefer to be looked upon with St. Paul for the sake of our faithfulness toward Comte as fools than to be praised by the contemporary frivolity as sages." And Audiffrent defends against Lafitte the diplomatic action of Comte's with the General of the Jesuits concerning an alliance between Positivism and Catholicism. Positivism, he says, invites all who have ceased to believe in God to become positivists, but it induces all those who still believe in God to turn Catholics, thus making an alliance possible of the disciplined against the non-disciplined.

If the Jesuit General ever has seriously considered the offer, he would perhaps have accepted it, for there is no doubt that he would have made the better bargain as all the discipline we should say is on his side.

The English group of Comtean Positivists consists mainly of Fr. Harrison, Richard Congreve, George Eliot and James Cotter Morison. The second part of the book which treats of the positivistic movement outside of the positivistic schools in England, France, Germany and other countries will be less interesting to English and American readers partly because the subject is better known to them partly because our author is apparently more familiar with his French than with his English sources. The second part begins with John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer. It mentions Bain, Lewes, Clifford, Maudsley, Darwin, Sully, Romanes, Huxley, Tyndall. Clifford's view is sketched in sixteen lines but in such a way that it appears grotesque. As French positivists outside the schools are mentioned Taine, Ribot, Fouillée, Guyau, Charles Richet, J. Luys, Cl. Bernard, and Roberty. It is correctly said of Ribot that his doctrine of personality is most characteristic of his views. The unity of a personality in the ego does not grow from above downwards but from below upwards, but Gruber is mistaken in saying of Charles Richet, the editor of the *Revue Scientifique*, that he represents about the same views as Th. Ribot. Richet's publication on telepathic experiments in which he confidently believes, would never be countenanced by Ribot.

As the first German positivist is mentioned Eugen Dühring. Riehl, Laas, Lange, Vaihinger and Avenarius are disposed of together in the next following chapter. Several pages are devoted to Wundt.

The little chapter headed *Nord-America* (p. 171) consisting of two and a half pages begins with the words: "According to the testimony of G. Stanley Hall philosophy in the new world is in its swaddling-clothes still (*in den Kinderschuhen*). Philosophers over there are as rare as snakes in Ireland (*Schlangen in Norwegen*).† For scientific instruction in the United States are used as guiding stars Spencer,

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\*... "A représenter le positivisme comme directement résumé par l'utopie de la Vierge-Mère"—Comte to Audiffrent, the 8th of St. Paul 69 (May 28, 1857.)

† Good philosophers, it is true, are rare in America, perhaps rarer than in Europe. Nevertheless the interest in philosophy is exceedingly strong here. There are metaphysical and philosophical clubs all over the country, and the crop of philosophical dilettanti is at least as great on this side of the Atlantic as in Paris.

Lewes, Darwin, Huxley, and Haeckel." As a representative Atheist is named Ludeking, a man unknown to fame, while Colonel Ingersoll is not mentioned at all. It is maintained that J. D. Bell, a professor in New York had proclaimed the same confession of faith as Comte in *The Modern Thinker*—a journal which we have never seen nor ever heard of. The societies for ethical culture are characterised as avowing "a purely natural religion" while in fact natural religion, the religion of science and philosophy, as a basis of ethics is as rigorously rejected by Professor Adler as any dogmatic religion, and more than half of the two and a half pages is filled with a masonic proclamation of the Sovereign Grand Commander, Albert Pike, of Washington, which preaches the belief in an unknowable God and denounces Atheism.

The booklet closes with the following sentences: "The full and true positivism is embodied in the Catholic Church. The divine revelation which she represents is that which is truly real . . . truly sure . . . truly precise . . . truly organic . . . truly useful. The deepest root, however, and the most essential nature of all true positivism (this is vouched for by reason as well as by revelation) is not the relative but the absolute."

Here we conclude our review of the book. We have however to add a few words which concern *The Monist* as well as all the publications of The Open Court Publishing Co. Hermann Gruber mentions in his book *The Open Court* and its editor together with the societies for ethical culture. We have, ourselves, characterised our views as positivism and as monism, but we stated at the same time that our positivism had nothing to do with Comte or with any one of Comte's disciples.\* They have (with the sole exception of Ribot and I should hesitate to call him a Comtean) contributed little if anything to the formation of our views. The name Positivism is a good and expressive word and we have adopted it because taken in its proper meaning it represents the true principle of modern philosophy. However we cannot agree with any of the fundamental tenets either of Comte or of his most positivistic and most scientific disciple Littré.† Comte as well as Littré are radical agnostics they repeat again and again that "We can know nothing about first and final causes. Positive philosophy denies nothing and maintains nothing." According to our view of the subject this attitude is rather negativism than positiv-

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\*It is a matter of course that we are in strong sympathy with many philosophers and scientists whom Hermann Gruber classes among the positivists outside of the positivistic schools, not only Th. Ribot, but also Guyau, Fouillée, Roberty, and others. How much they were influenced by the Comte-Littré or the Comte-Lafitte Positivism is difficult to say. It is certain that many of them would have accomplished the same work in the same way with or without Comte. Roberty was first a fervid disciple of Comte, but he soon combated not only Comte's law of the three stages (which latter by the bye was according to Schaarschmidt first pronounced by Turgot) but also his agnosticism, declaring that Comte was still entangled in metaphysicism, and that the last bulwark, the idea of the unknowable, had to be conquered also.

† We publish in this number a sonnet by Louis Belrose, Jr. to Emile Littré. Mr. Belrose is a positivist who attended together with Mr. Fred. Harrison positivistic lectures in France. We publish Mr. Belrose's poem as an expression of his gratitude and admiration toward a master mind but not as an expression of our view of Littré.

ism. But it is not even negativism; it is worse, it is mere scepticism leading to indifferentism. It sounds very philosophical to speak of the inscrutability of first and final causes but the very terms "first causes" and "final causes" are most nonsensical and self-contradictory concepts. (See "Fundamental Problems," pp. 88-90, and 101.) Comte and Littré imagine to have conquered metaphysics, but in fact they are the worst kind of metaphysicians. They believe in the ghosts of metaphysics as strongly as some mediæval minds believe in devils but are afraid to wrestle with them, because, as they maintain these metaphysical ghosts cannot be conquered.

Comtean Positivism, especially as it is represented by Littré, consists mainly if not exclusively of the doctrine to "let metaphysics alone" (which latter includes the object of religious worship) and limits science to positive issues. Thus the oneness of the sciences, a unitary world-conception is lost, for the hierarchy of the sciences which are to serve as a substitute for philosophy is rather a summing up of the stock of knowledge than a system of the sciences exhibiting their organic growth. It is an inventory rather than a plan to guide science in its further evolution. It is an anatomy rather than a physiology, for the very life and spirit of the sciences is missing. And outside the pale of the hierarchy of the sciences there is looming around an awful something quite different in its nature, like an infinite ocean surrounding a forlorn island, the unknowable first and final causes! That which is called by former philosophers "metaphysics," which is at the same time the essence of religion, is by no means either unknowable or indifferent. It is not something beyond, something extramundane, it is the very life of the world and our religious and philosophical opinions are not only of a theoretical interest. They are the main factors of our lives which in the long run will determine the direction of our development. That this is so, has not been sufficiently recognised, and we would suggest in this connection that a history of the United States should be written to point out that the political liberty of the country and its republicanism are nothing but the application of its religious principles and of the Puritan conviction of religious independence. The historic growth of the colonies remained faithful to this maxim. The religion of a man and of a nation is the most important thing. In the same way the structure of a seed predetermines the whole plant, and the angle of crystallisation together with the shape of the crystal-nucleus from which the process of crystallisation starts, will determine the formation of the whole crystal.

His sceptical attitude led Littré to what he and his friends call "tolerance." Littré's wife was a devout Catholic and his daughter was educated in her mother's faith. He had intended to explain to her his views of the subject when she had reached maturity, and leave the choice to her. But when the moment came, he declared that "the experiment was not worth the tears which it would cause." Our view of "tolerance" is radically different. Whatever the truth may be it should be struggled for, cost it ever so many tears or pains.

We cannot sympathise with Littré's method of constructing ethics upon the nutritive and sexual instincts, the former producing egotism, the latter altruism. Emotions are, says Littré, as much as ideas, the result of brain-processes in consequence of external impressions and "the struggle between both kinds of emotion make up the moral life." Littré rejects the evolution theory and its attempts to explain ethics. (See Gruber's book p. 20.) Having explained our views of ethics on other occasions, it is sufficient here to state that we consider Littré's attempt as a failure. We cannot even adopt the so-called "positive method," of which Littré says: "Whoever adopts this method is a positivist and whether he acknowledges the fact or not, also a disciple of Comte. Whoever employs another method is a metaphysician. It is the surest mark by which a careful mind will discriminate what belongs to the positive philosophy and what is foreign to it." What is this method? Says Littré: "It is an acknowledged principle of positive science that nothing real can be stated through reasoning (*raisonnement*). The world cannot be guessed." Littré is opposed to so-called *a priori* arguments. Hermann Gruber says in the préface: "This positive method is embraced by all the representatives of the lines of thought here discussed. All of them intend to build up their systems with the exclusion of scholastic, respectively of Kantian, Hegelian, or any *a priori* speculations after purely 'scientific' methods upon the foundation of the facts of experience." We certainly intend to build our world conception "upon the facts of experience" but the most important facts among them are their formal relations and these formal relations when represented in thought are exactly that element which Kant called *a priori*. The sense-element affords us the building stones, but the *a priori* element represents the mortar without which we could not build. So much do we oppose this one-sided philosophy which takes its stand upon what is wrongly called the purely scientific method, that our views have been called the Philosophy of Form, and justly, for Form is that feature of the world which makes of it a cosmos and formal thought is the organ of our comprehension. κρς.

UEBER DEN ASSOCIATIVEN VERLAUF DER VORSTELLUNGEN. Inaugural-Dissertation.

By E. W. Scripture, M. A., Fellow of Clark University. Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann. 1891.

This essay of 102 pages characterises most excellently some of the proceedings and methods of Professor Wundt's psychological laboratory. The author, a disciple of Wundt, is a native American who studied in Berlin, Zürich, and Leipzig, and took his degree of Doctor on the ground of this dissertation. The object of the treatise is not so much to solve as to formulate the problem of the associative course of concepts, and the author hopes that in a future treatise he will be able to propound his theory based upon the facts here related.

The experiments were made with the assistance of seven friends, among them German students, a doctor of philosophy, a doctor of medicine, and a teacher. They were of different nationality, three Germans, one Belgian, one Japanese, one